

## MEMORANDUM

1998-1999

TO : PARTICIPANTS IN 1997-1998 SERC WINTER BIRD COUNT

FROM : Linda McCann

RE : RESULTS OF 9 JANUARY 1999 COUNT

DATE : 29 March 1999

Weather: The early part of the winter of 1998-99 was unusually mild (as was also true of the last 2 years). However the day of the count, morning temperatures did not get out of the teens. Due to the warm weather leading up to the weekend, there was no ice in any of the coves around the count area. Skies were mostly clear and breezes remained gentle to calm - a good day in the woods.

The count.-- Saturday morning was foggy and cold so the count was aborted, although some of us met for chili that night anyway. It was decided to try again Sunday, although this would necessitate a shorter count, as many of us had obligations later that day. One hardy soul came down and spent four hours censusing in the fog. This added at least one species to our list! Thanks Whitman! Sunday was clear, though very cold. Despite the cold temperatures and the knowledge that the usual supper could not be provided after a hard days work, nine volunteers showed up at the SERC visitor's center at 07:00. As usual, we broke up into four parties, each of which covered a different sector of the 70 km<sup>2</sup> Rhode River count area (this is less than 5% the size of a standard 1,810 km<sup>2</sup> Audubon Christmas Count circle).

The total number of species sighted was within the normal range (63), though not so high as in the last few years. Several species that were tallied last year were missing from the count this year (several ducks and the red headed woodpecker). This was probably due to having fewer experts on hand, and fewer search hours overall. Thanks so much to those who were able to participate this year, despite the delay. I hope to see you all again next year.

cc: Ed Balinsky, Greg Ruiz, Paul Fofonoff, Tuck Hines, Linda McCann, Bert Drake, Rene Voss, Denny Whigham, and Whitman Miller (Saturday)

**Results of 1998 SERC winter bird count (9 January 1999)**

No. of observers: 9    No. of parties: 4    Party hrs: ca. 24    Weather: Temp = 10-20° F; winds: calm to slight; Ice: none; Cloud cover: 0-10%    Sectors: 1 - Camp Letts S. to Dock Rd; 2 - Dock Rd S. to Muddy Creek; 3 - Muddy Creek S. to Cumberstone Rd; 4 - Cumberstone Rd. S. to West River.

Species	No. counted in sector				total
	1	2	3	4	
Horned Grebe	0	0	0	0	0
Great Blue Heron	1	23	1	0	24
Tundra Swan	0	0	30	40	93
Mute Swan	0	0	0	0	0
Canada Goose	362	99	83	225	769
Mallard	5	32	0	25	87
Black Duck	5	10	160	4	194
Canvasback	1	0	0	2200	2,201
Lesser Scaup	1	0	0	12	13
Common Goldeneye	1	0	0	0	1
Bufflehead	5	0	0	8	13
Ruddy Duck	0	0	0	2500	2500
Red-breasted Merganser	0	0	0	0	0
Hooded Merganser	0	14	0	0	14
Turkey Vulture	2	2	2	1	7
Black Vulture	2	1	1	0	4
Bald Eagle	5	0	3	0	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	0
Red-tailed Hawk	2	2	1	2	7
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	0	0	0	2
Kestrel	1	0	0	0	1
Marsh Harrier	0	0	0	0	0
Kildeer	3	2	0	1	6
Herring Gull	27	15	8	39	89
Ring-billed Gull	15	12	8	0	35
Great Black-backed Gull	1	0	2	0	3
Lesser Black-backed Gull	0	0	0	0	0
Mourning Dove	10	15	1	3	29
Rock Dove	0	0	0	0	0
Great Horned Owl	0	0	0	0	0
Barred Owl	0	0	0	0	0
Screech Owl	0	0	0	0	0
Long-eared Owl	0	0	0	0	0
Belted Kingfisher	2	5	0	0	7
Common Flicker	5	1	2	6	14
Pileated Woodpecker	3	2	1	0	6
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3	2	0	0	5
Hairy Woodpecker	1	2	1	0	4
Downy Woodpecker	5	3	1	3	12

Results of 1998 SERC winter bird count (11 January 1996) - continued

Species	No. counted in sector				total
	1	2	3	4	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	7	13	6	32	28 29
Red-headed Woodpecker	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Phoebe	1	0	0	0	1
Common Crow	34	3	10	13	60
Fish Crow	0	0	0	0	0
Blue Jay	14 10	20	5	0	39 41
Carolina Chickadee	26	28	3	4	41 61
Tufted Titmouse	15	25	5	5	50
White-br. Nuthatch	2	0	0	0	2
Brown Creeper	0	0	0	0	0
Carolina Wren	5	4	0	0	9
Winter Wren	5	0	1	0	1
Northern Mockingbird	18	0	2	1	21
Brown Thrasher	0	0	0	0	0
American Robin	50	37	45	0	132
Hermit Thrush	0	2	0	0	2
Eastern Bluebird	11	0	24	31	66
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	1	0	0	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	4	0	0	4
Cedar Waxwing	0	11	3	5	19
European Starling	3	15	25	112	155
Yellow-rumped Warbler	20	20	13	32	85
House Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0
Red-winged Blackbird	0	0	1	0	1
Common Grackle	1500	40	500	0	2040
Northern Cardinal	18	30	10	9	67
Purple Finch	0	5	0	36	41
House Finch	6	0	0	0	6
American Goldfinch	3	32	22	10	37 38
Rufous-sided Towhee	0	2	2	1	5
Dark-eyed Junco	27	110	37	0	154
White-thr. Sparrow	25	4	50	12	91
White-crowned Sparrow	0	85	0	0	85
Swamp Sparrow	0	0	0	3	3
Song Sparrow	4	29	11	3	47
Fox Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0
Pine Siskin	5	0	0	0	5
Black Birds		many			
Unidentified Gulls		5			
Unidentified Woodpecker		5			
Ducks (goldeneye or bufflehead)		8		50	
<i>Sparrow</i>				3	
Total Species	63	60			
sector 2 pintail, ring-necked duck, gadwall (6)					
sector 4 pintail (4)					

Area 2 add species we  
didn't get

SERC Annual Winter Bird Count - January 8, 1999

White-crowned Sparrow	85
Northern Junco	110
Mourning Dove	15
Winter wren	1
Carolina wren	4
Blue Jay	20
Northern Cardinal	30
Crow	50
Tufted Titmouse	25
Carolina Chickadee	28
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4
Yellow-rumped Warbler	20
Robin	37
Cedar Waxwing	11
Grackle	25
American Goldfinch	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	13
Downy Woodpecker	3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2
Pileated Woodpecker	2
Great Blue Heron	3
Bald Eagle	3
Hermit Thrush	2
Belted Kingfisher	1
Canada Geese	80
Mallard	30
Turkey Vulture	1
European Starling	15
Red-tailed Hawk	2
Yellow-shafted Flicker	5 → ?
Kildeer	1
Black Duck	160
Ring-neck Duck	1
Hooded Merganser	14
Ring-bill Gull	12
Herring Gull	15
Pintail	1
Ruddy Duck	2
Gadwall	6
Tundra Swan	23
Plastic Great Horned Owl	1

Observers: Whitman Miller

Freezing rain turning to drizzle and fog. Visibility low (122-200 ft), 100% cloud cover. Temperature @ 7:00 approx 30 warming to 40 by noon. Wind picked up at 1:30, stopped at 1:45. Discovery Trail, Hog Island, Java Trail, Serc Pier, Beaver Pond and ridge to water tower. Fog lifted by 2:30, temperature began dropping to freezing by end of count at 3:45.

## SERC Winter Bird Checklist

Observers Whigham, DRAKEDate 1/10/99 Sector 43  
Party Size 2 Party Hrs 7:30 - Noon  
Miles: Foot  Car  Boat  Total 

Species	Individuals	Species	Individuals
Common Loon		Common Crow	1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 1
Great Blue Heron	1	Fish Crow	
Tundra Swan	1, 4, 15	Blue Jay	4, 1
Canada Goose	1, 1, 10, 6, 13, 13, 10, 10, 6, 23	Carolina Chickadee	2, 1
Mallard		Tufted Titmouse	2, 1, 1, 1
Black Duck	4	White-br. Nuthatch	
Wood Duck		Red-br. Nuthatch	
Redhead		Brown Creeper	
Canvasback		Carolina Wren	
Greater Scaup		Winter Wren	
Lesser Scaup		N. Mockingbird	1, 1
Scaup sp.		Brown Thrasher	
Comm. Goldeneye		Gray Catbird	
Bufflehead		American Robin	9, 11, 25
Ruddy Duck		Hermit Thrush	
Bed-br. Merganser		Eastern Bluebird	1, 7, 3, 4, 5, 3, 1
Oldsquaw		Ruby-cr. Kinglet	
Turkey Vulture	1, 1	Golden-cr. Kinglet	
Black Vulture	1	Cedar Waxwing	3
Bald Eagle		European Starling	as
Sharp-shinned Hawk		Yell.-rumped Warbler	1, 4, 6, 2
Red-tailed Hawk	1	House Sparrow	
Red-shouldered Hawk		Red-winged Blackbird	1
American Kestrel		Eastern Meadowlark	
Bobwhite		Common Grackle	500
Kildeer		Brown-headed Cowbird	
Herring Gull	3, 2, 3	Northern Cardinal	1, 2, 4, 12
Ring-billed Gull	1, 4, 3	Purple Finch	
Gr. Black-backed Gull	1, 1	House Finch	
Mourning Dove	1	Am. Goldfinch	10, 2, 2, 5, 3
Great Horned Owl		Ruf.-sided Towhee	2
Barred Owl		Dark-eyed Junco	10, 12, 15
Barn Owl		Field Sparrow	
Belted Kingfisher		Wh.-throated Sparrow	6, 7, 12, 2, 3, 2, 12, 6
Common Flicker	1	Swamp Sparrow	
Pileated Woodpecker	1	Song Sparrow	1, 1, 4, 3, 2
Yellow-bel. Sapsucker			
Hairy Woodpecker	1		
Downy Woodpecker	1		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1, 1, 1, 1, 1		
Eastern Phoebe			

Rare or sporadic at SERC in winter : Red-throated Loon, Pied-billed grebe, Horned Grebe, Pintail, American Widgeon, Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Mute Swan, Cooper's Hawk, Marsh Harrier, American Coot, American Woodcock, Common Snipe, Virginia Rail, Rock Dove, Semi-palmated Plover, Screech Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Marsh Wren, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, White-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Tree Sparrow

## SERC Winter Bird Checklist

Observers Greg Ruz, Tuck Hines

Date 1/10/99 Sector 49  
 Party Size 2 Party Hrs 5  
 Miles: Foot 2 Car 2 Boat 0 Total 4

Species	Individuals	Species	Individuals
Pintail	0/0/4/0 = 4	Common Crow	2/4, 2/2, 2/1 = 13
Common Loon		Fish Crow	
Great Blue Heron		Blue Jay	
Tundra Swan	0/0/2, 6, 12/20 = 40	Carolina Chickadee	0/0/0/2, 2 = 4
Canada Goose	16/25/25, 4/2, 4 = 225	Tufted Titmouse	0/2/2/11 = 5
Mallard	0/0/6/25 = 25	White-br. Nuthatch	
Black Duck	0/0/20/0 = 20	Red-br. Nuthatch	
Wood Duck		Brown Creeper	
Redhead		Carolina Wren	
Canvasback	0/0/200/200 = 2200	Winter Wren	
Greater Scaup		N. Mockingbird	0/0/0/1 = 1
Lesser Scaup	0/0/1, 0/2, 3 = 12	Brown Thrasher	
Scaup sp.		Gray Catbird	
Comm. Goldeneye		American Robin	
Bufflehead	0/0/6, 2/0 = 8	Hermit Thrush	
Ruddy Duck	0/0/500, 2000/0 = 2500	Eastern Bluebird	0/1/8, 20/0, 2 = 31
Red-br. Merganser		Ruby-cr. Kinglet	
Oldsquaw		Golden-cr. Kinglet	
Turkey Vulture	0/1/0/0 = 1	Cedar Waxwing	0/0/15/0 = 5
Black Vulture		European Starling	100/6/12/0 = 112
Bald Eagle		Yell.-rumped Warbler	10/0/0/2/30 = 32
Sharp-shinned Hawk		House Sparrow	
Red-tailed Hawk	1/0/0/0, 1 = 2	Red-winged Blackbird	
Red-shouldered Hawk		Eastern Meadowlark	
American Kestrel		Common Grackle	
Bobwhite		Brown-headed Cowbird	
Kildeer	0/0/1/0 = 1	Northern Cardinal	
Herring Gull	2/3/8, 4, 20/2 = 39	Purple Finch	0/2/9/25/0 = 36
Ring-billed Gull		House Finch	
Gr. Black-backed Gull		Am. Goldfinch	0/0/10/0 = 10
Mourning Dove	1/0/0/2 = 3	Ruf.-sided Towhee	0/0/1/0 = 1
Great Horned Owl		Dark-eyed Junco	
Barred Owl		Field Sparrow	
Barn Owl		Wh.-throated Sparrow	1/0/3/0 = 12
Belted Kingfisher		Swamp Sparrow	0/0/0/2 = 2
Common Flicker	1/3/0/2 = 6	Song Sparrow	0/0/2/1 = 3
Pileated Woodpecker		Sparrow?	= 3
Yellow-bel. Sapsucker		unidentified duck	= 50
Hairy Woodpecker			
Downy Woodpecker	2/0/0/1 = 3		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	0/6/0/3 = 3		
Eastern Phoebe			

Rare or sporadic at SERC in winter : Red-throated Loon, Pied-billed grebe, Horned Grebe, Pintail, American Widgeon, Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Mute Swan, Cooper's Hawk, Marsh Harrier, American Coot, American Woodcock, Common Snipe, Virginia Rail, Rock Dove, Semi-palmated Plover, Screech Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Marsh Wren, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, White-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Tree Sparrow

## SERC Winter Bird Checklist

Observers L McCann, R. Voss

Date 1-10-98 Sector 2  
 Party Size 2 Party Hrs 4½  
 Miles: Foot ✓ Car ✓ Boat Total  
 road

Species	Individuals	Species	Individuals
Common Loon		Common Crow	111
Great Blue Heron	11	Fish Crow	
Tundra Swan		Blue Jay	11
Canada Goose	21+5+17+29+3+20	Carolina Chickadee	111111
Mallard		Tufted Titmouse	1111
Black Duck		White-br. Nuthatch	
Wood Duck		Red-br. Nuthatch	
Redhead		Brown Creeper	
Canvasback		Carolina Wren	1111
Greater Scaup		Winter Wren	
Lesser scaup		N. Mockingbird	
Scaup sp.		Brown Thrasher	
Comm. Goldeneye		Gray Catbird	
Bufflehead		American Robin	444411
Buddy Duck		Hermit Thrush	111
Red-br. Merganser		Eastern Bluebird	
Oldsquaw		Ruby-cr. Kinglet	1
Turkey Vulture	2?	Golden-cr. Kinglet	
Black Vulture	1	Cedar Waxwing	111
Bald Eagle		European Starling	
Sharp-shinned Hawk		Yell.-rumped Warbler	1111
Red-tailed Hawk	1	House Sparrow	
Red-shouldered Hawk		Red-winged Blackbird	
American Kestrel		Eastern Meadowlark	
Bobwhite		Common Grackle	1000 40
Kildeer	11	Brown-headed Cowbird	
Herring Gull		Northern Cardinal	111
Bing-billed Gull		Purple Finch	111
Gr. Black-backed Gull		House Finch	
Mourning Dove	111	Am. Goldfinch	1
Great Horned Owl		Ruf.-sided Towhee	11
Barred Owl		Dark-eyed Junco	111
Barn Owl		Field Sparrow	
Belted Kingfisher	111	Wh.-throated Sparrow	111
Common Flicker	1	Swamp Sparrow	
Pileated Woodpecker	1	Song Sparrow	111125
Yellow-bel. Sapsucker	1 or ♀ red bellied	DUCKS w/ WITH ROUND SPOT on HEAD	8 (Goldeneye or Bufflehead)
Hairy Woodpecker	11?	unid. WOODPECKER	1111
Downy Woodpecker		unid. BLACKBIRDS - plenty	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	111		
Eastern Phoebe			

unid. Gull 11/11

Rare or sporadic at SERC in winter: Red-throated Loon, Pied-billed grebe, Horned Grebe, Pintail, American Widgeon, Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Mute Swan, Cooper's Hawk, Marsh Harrier, American Coot, American Woodcock, Common Snipe, Virginia Rail, Rock Dove, Semi-palmated Plover, Screech Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Marsh Wren, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, White-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Tree Sparrow

TO : PARTICIPANTS IN 1996 SERC WINTER BIRD COUNT  
FROM : JIM LYNCH *Jim Lynch*  
RE : RESULT OF COUNT  
DATE : 15 JANUARY 1996

The count was originally scheduled for 13 January, but was postponed to the 14th due to heavy snow before the count. So far, the winter of 1995-96 has been unusually cold, and the storm of 6-8 January produced the region's heaviest snowfall in more than 70 years (up to 24" fell in the SERC area). An additional 3-6" of snow fell on 11-12 January. The day of the count was clear and cool (25-45° F), with little wind. The snow cover already had begun to melt and compact by the day of the count, but the area was still covered with about 24" of crusted snow, making cross-country walking very tiring. The two snowstorms that struck the area were preceded by a cold snap, and the Rhode River and West River were completely ice-covered on 14 January. As a result, most waterfowl were absent from the count area, having moved to areas of open water closer to the Bay proper. Last year we counted nine species of waterfowl, but this year we tallied only two. This was especially frustrating because 1995 was an excellent year for waterfowl reproduction in the northern prairies, and large numbers of ducks were present on the Rhode River just prior to the cold snap.

We mustered 14 volunteers at the SERC visitor's center at 07:00. The group was divided into four parties, each of which covered a different sector of the 70 km<sup>2</sup> Rhode River count area (this is about 5% of the area covered by a standard 1,810 km<sup>2</sup> Audubon Christmas Count circle). One field party was accompanied by photographer Cameron Davidson, who was taking pictures for an article on SERC that will appear in a future issue of *Smithsonian* magazine. Each party was in the field for 5-6 hours. Although weather conditions were good on the day of the count, the lack of open water and the difficulty of traversing areas away from plowed roads resulted in a final tally of bird species and individuals that was well below the levels seen in previous SERC counts. As an example, the 1993, 1994, and 1995 counts yielded 70, 68, and 60 species, respectively. This year's total was only 44 species. A major exception to this year's dearth of waterfowl records was provided by the Canada Goose. A minimum of 2,184 honkers was counted, as flight after flight passed over the count area on their way from a resting area in the Rhode River to feeding grounds in nearby fields. This represents an all-time high for our winter count of this species, and may reflect the recent increase in Canada Goose numbers on the western shore of Chesapeake Bay.

The results of this year's count highlight the dramatic effects of weather on winter bird distributions, and serve as a useful baseline for comparison with counts conducted under more favorable conditions. Thanks to all of you for helping out, and I look forward to seeing you back for next year's effort.

cc: Ed Balinsky, John Bohannon, Cameron Davidson, Paul Fofonoff, Charlotte Fox, Annette Frese, Elizabeth Goodrich, Neil Goodrich, Liza Hamill, Stephanie Jamieson, Linda McCann, Jess Parker, Greg Ruiz, Jim Seigal, Denny Whigham

Linda - So glad you made it! See you in a few weeks.  
*Jim*

### Results of 1996 SERC winter bird count (14 January 1996)

No. of observers: 14    No. of parties: 4    Party hrs: ca. 22    Km on foot: ca. 12    Km in car: ca. 10    Total km: ca. 22    Weather: clear; T = 25-45° F; winds: mostly calm to light    Ice: complete ice cover in all bodies of water in count area    Sectors: 1 - Camp letts S. to Contee's Wharf Rd; 2 - Contee's Wharf Rd S. to Muddy Creek; 3 - Muddy Creek S. to Cumberstone Rd; 4 - Cumberstone Rd. S. to West River.

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Species	No. counted in sector				total
	1	2	3	4	
Tundra Swan		6			6
Canada Goose	2184	125	56	215	2184*
Turkey Vulture	2	2	3	1	8
Black Vulture	2	12	6		20
Red-tailed Hawk	1	1	2	1	5
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	2			4
Marsh Harrier		1			1
Ring-billed Gull	26			3	29
Mourning Dove	8	3	2		13
Belted Kingfisher		2	2		4
Common Flicker	2	2	4	3	11
Pileated Woodpecker	1	1			2
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	1	4	1	7
Hairy Woodpecker		1		1	2
Downy Woodpecker	4	2	5	7	18
Red-bellied Woodpecker	11	8	11	4	34
Common Crow	42	24	5	7	78
Blue Jay	13	15	5		53
Carolina Chickadee	10	7	15	8	40
Tufted Titmouse	4	6	11	12	33
White-br. Nuthatch	1	3	5		9
Brown Creeper				3	3
Carolina Wren	3				3
Northern Mockingbird	12	4	6	2	24
Brown Thrasher	2		2		4
Gray Catbird				1	1
American Robin		1		3	4
Hermit Thrush	7	2	5	3	17
Eastern Bluebird		4	9	1	14
Cedar Waxwing		20			20
Eur. Starling	22	31	12	1	66
Yellow-rumped Warbler	9	5	8	1	23
House Sparrow	3	10			13
Red-winged Blackbird	56				56
Common Grackle	70				70

\* - birds seen in sectors 2-4 assumed to be the same individuals as in sector 1

**Results of 1996 SERC winter bird count (14 January 1996) - continued**

Species	<u>No. counted in sector</u>				total
	1	2	3	4	
Northern Cardinal	18	8	34	13	73
House Finch	1		1		2
American Goldfinch	1			6	7
Rufous-sided Towhee	1		3		4
Dark-eyed Junco	29	8	34	13	51
White-thr. Sparrow	14	26	69	14	123
Swamp Sparrow				2	2
Song Sparrow	3	5	3		11
Tree Sparrow			1		1
Total Species	32	31	27	24	44

## MEMORANDUM

TO : PARTICIPANTS IN 1997-1998 SERC WINTER BIRD COUNT

FROM : JIM LYNCH *Jim Lynch*

RE : RESULTS OF 10 JANUARY 1998 COUNT

DATE : 20 JANUARY 1998

Weather: The winter of 1997-98 has been unusually mild (as was also true last year), and daily high temperatures remained in the mid-60's for nearly a week prior to the count. Conditions began to return to normal the day before the count, and participants awoke to a light frost on the morning of 10 January. Nevertheless, temperatures reached the mid-50's by afternoon, and there was no ice in any of the coves around the count area. Skies were mostly clear, and breezes remained gentle to calm - all in all, a wonderful day to be out tramping around.

The count.-- We mustered a record 22 volunteers at the SERC visitor's center at 07:00. As usual, we broke up into four parties, each of which covered a different sector of the 70 km<sup>2</sup> Rhode River count area (this is less than 5% the size of a standard 1,810 km<sup>2</sup> Audubon Christmas Count circle). Each party was in the field for 7-9 hours. Weather conditions were excellent, and our final tally of 74 bird species broke the previous record of 70 species, set in 1993. Among the species tallied this year were several that had never been encountered in our previous winter bird surveys, which go back to the early 1980's. These new species included Horned Grebe, Merlin, Long-eared Owl, Screech Owl, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Rock Dove.

This year we tallied 11 waterfowl species, several in record numbers for the SERC count. An enormous mixed flock of 3,700+ Canvasback and Ruddy Duck was found on the Rhode River in the vicinity of the SERC dock. Count totals for these two species were 2,287 and 3,813, respectively - both all-time records for SERC. The figures for Ruddy Duck are especially impressive, as the species was totally absent from the winter counts in 1993-94, 1994-95, and 1995-96. Last year Ruddy Ducks returned with a vengeance (count total: 1,248), and this year's count tripled that impressive total. These increases parallel two extremely productive breeding season for Ruddy Ducks in the prairie pothole region of north-central North America.

Hooded Mergansers, which were first tallied in last year's count, were present again this year (3 individuals) and Red-headed Woodpeckers, formerly very sporadic, were present for the third year in a row. These woodpeckers may now be breeding at SERC in the large expanse of dead trees created a few years ago by a beaver impoundment. Adults and a young bird were observed there last summer.

Thanks for participating in the count, and I hope to see you all again next year.

cc: Ed Balinsky, Danny Bystrak, Sheila Carroll, Paul Fofonoff, Liza Hamill, Doug Hayes, Rebecca Hayes, Stephanie Jamieson, Jim Lynch, Mark Lynch, Joe McCann, Linda McCann, Dave McNally, Dotty Mumford, Kim Phillips, Andy Pupke, Chris Pupke, Greg Ruiz, George Smith, Chris Swarth, Denny Whigham, Julie White

**Results of 1997 SERC winter bird count (10 January 1998)**

No. of observers: 22 No. of parties: 4 Party hrs: ca. 32 Weather: Temp = 30-55° F; winds: calm to slight ; Ice: none; Cloud cover: 0-10% Sectors: 1 - Camp Letts S. to Dock Rd; 2 - Dock Rd S. to Muddy Creek; 3 - Muddy Creek S. to Cumberstone Rd; 4 - Cumberstone Rd. S. to West River.

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Species	No. counted in sector				total
	1	2	3	4	
Horned Grebe	1				1
Great Blue Heron		2	2	7	11
Tundra Swan		5	8	57	70
Mute Swan		2		2	4
Canada Goose	210	120	500	245	1,075
Mallard		9	20	33	62
Black Duck		64	150	61	275
Canvasback	2,263	4	20		2,287
Lesser Scaup	1			1	2
Common Goldeneye				3	3
Bufflehead	10	3	2	73	88
Ruddy Duck	1,510	290	2,000	13	3,813
Red-breasted Merganser				1	1
Hooded Merganser		2		1	3
Turkey Vulture	10	8	4	3	25
Black Vulture	4	2	6		12
Bald Eagle		1		2	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk		2			2
Red-tailed Hawk	3	1	2	2	8
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	1	1		4
Merlin				1	1
Marsh Harrier	1				1
Kildeer				70	70
Herring Gull	3	6	5	64	78
Ring-billed Gull	4	8	2	29	43
Great Black-backed Gull	1		1	1	3
Lesser Black-backed Gull			1		1
Mourning Dove	2		4	8	14
Rock Dove				20	20
Great Horned Owl	1			2	3
Barred Owl			1		1
Screech Owl				1	1
Long-eared Owl				1	1
Belted Kingfisher		6	3	2	11
Common Flicker	7	20	8	19	54
Pileated Woodpecker	1	6	3	1	11
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		1	5	6	12
Hairy Woodpecker	1	3	2	5	11
Downy Woodpecker	5	21	15	5	46

**Results of 1997 SERC winter bird count (11 January 1996) - continued**

Species	<u>No. counted in sector</u>				total
	1	2	3	4	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	7	20	18	29	74
Red-headed Woodpecker		2			2
Common Crow	32	45	50	25	152
Fish Crow				2	2
Blue Jay	27	13	5	22	67
Carolina Chickadee	49	40	40	23	152
Tufted Titmouse	10	30	20	37	97
White-br. Nuthatch	3	3	10	6	22
Brown Creeper		3	3	3	9
Carolina Wren	4	7	10	5	26
Winter Wren				4	4
Northern Mockingbird	11	3		8	22
Brown Thrasher			1	4	5
American Robin		9	40	2	51
Hermit Thrush	2	7	7	8	24
Eastern Bluebird	4	1	12	7	24
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				1	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet			1	5	6
Cedar Waxwing	17		5	133	155
European Starling	22	21		12	55
Yellow-rumped Warbler	4	22	7	25	58
House Sparrow		1		2	3
Red-winged Blackbird	24	1		4	29
Common Grackle		62		10	72
Northern Cardinal	22	18	17	36	93
House Finch	17			3	20
American Goldfinch	4	21	5	13	43
Rufous-sided Towhee	4	1	2	9	16
Dark-eyed Junco	36	21	35		92
White-thr. Sparrow	29	25	60	114	228
Swamp Sparrow	2		30	3	35
Song Sparrow		7	30	21	58
Fox Sparrow	1		2		3
Pine Siskin				2	2
Total Species	41	49	47	62	74

**Results of 1995 SERC winter bird count (held 8 January 1995)**

No. of observers: 12    No. of parties: 3    Party hrs: ca. 18    Km on foot: ca. 20  
Km in car: ca. 15    Total km: ca. 35    Weather: Partly cloudy to sunny; T = 30-40°F;  
winds: mostly calm to light; no ice in inlets; SECTORS: 1 - Camp letts S. to Contee's Wharf Rd;  
2 - Contee's Wharf Rd S. to Muddy Creek; 3 - Muddy Creek S. to Cumberstone Rd;  
4 - Cumberstone Rd. S. to West R.

Species	No. counted in sector				
	1	2	3	4	total
Great Blue Heron	1	11	4		16
Tundra Swan	35	32		100	167
Mute Swan		2			2
Canada Goose	32	500		27	557
Mallard	21	1	12	5	41
Black Duck	2	16	13	20	51
American Shoveller			1		1
Canvasback	70			1	71
Scaup sp.	1				1
Common Goldeneye				2	2
Bufflehead	14			117	131
Turkey Vulture	6	4	8	1	19
Black Vulture	3		8		11
Bald Eagle	3			1	4
Red-tailed Hawk	1			1	2
Red-shouldered Hawk		1			1
American Kestrel	2		1		3
Bobwhite		1			1
Kildeer	3		16	1	20
Herring Gull		29	1	59	89
Ring-billed Gull	30			2	32
Mourning Dove	5	20	7	1	33
Belted Kingfisher	1	2			3
Common Flicker	3	4	1		8
Pileated Woodpecker		2			2
Yellow-b. Sapsucker	2	2			4
Hairy Woodpecker		1	2	3	6
Downy Woodpecker	4	3	5	2	14
Red-bel. Woodpecker	5	4	7	2	18
Red-hd. Woodpecker		2			2
Common Crow	15	11	8	101	135
Fish Crow	1				1
Blue Jay	21				21
Carolina Chickadee	10	7	15	8	40
Tufted Titmouse	4	11	10	9	34
White-br. Nuthatch	2	1			3
Brown Creeper		2			2
Carolina Wren	8		5		13

**Results of 1995 SERC winter bird count (held 8 January 1995)**

Species	No. counted in sector				
	1	2	3	4	total
N. Mockingbird	3		5		8
Brown Thrasher				1	1
American Robin	8	8	27	6	121
Hermit Thrush			5	2	7
Eastern Bluebird	5			13	18
Ruby-cr. Kinglet			2		2
Cedar Waxwing	100	225	14		339
Eur. Starling	18	8	73		99
Pine Siskin			21		21
Yellow-r. Warbler	25	2	5	8	40
Pine Warbler				1	1
Red-w. Blackbird		3	8		11
Common Grackle	4		200		204
Rusty Blackbird			1		1
Northern Cardinal	5	2	11	5	23
House Finch	10			10	20
Ruf.-sided Towhee			2		2
Dark-eyed Junco	20	2			22
Field Sparrow	1	7			8
White-thr. Sparrow	26	8	35	9	78
Swamp Sparrow			1	1	2
Song Sparrow	2	3	10	8	23
Total Species	41	36	33	28	60

revised June 1995

## Summer Checklist of Birds for SERC

Compiled by J.F. Lynch and D. Niven

These species occur regularly in the Rhode River-West River watershed during the summer months (June - August). Species marked with an asterisk (\*) are known to have bred in the watershed in recent years.

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— Yellow-crowned Night Heron	— Chimney Swift	— Yellow-throated Vireo*
— Great Blue Heron	— Ruby-throated Hummingbird*	— Northern Parula
— Green Heron	— Belted Kingfisher	— Pine Warbler
— Cattle Egret	— Common Flicker*	— Prairie Warbler*
— Common Egret	— Pileated Woodpecker*	— Common Yellowthroat*
— Snowy Egret	— Red-bellied Woodpecker*	— Ovenbird*
— Mute Swan*	— Red-headed Woodpecker	— Louisiana Waterthrush*
— Canada Goose*	— Hairy Woodpecker*	— Kentucky Warbler*
— Mallard*	— Downy Woodpecker*	— Yellow-breasted Chat*
— Black Duck*	— Eastern Kingbird	— Hooded Warbler*
— Wood Duck*	— Great Crested Flycatcher*	— American Redstart
— American Kestrel	— Eastern Phoebe*	— House Sparrow*
— Turkey Vulture*	— Acadian Flycatcher*	— Eastern Meadowlark
— Black Vulture*	— Eastern Wood Pewee*	— Red-winged Blackbird*
— Red-tailed Hawk	— Tree Swallow*	— Orchard Oriole
— Red-shouldered Hawk*	— Barn Swallow*	— Northern Oriole
— Bald Eagle*	— Purple Martin*	— Common Grackle*
— Osprey*	— Blue Jay*	— Brown-headed Cowbird*
— Bobwhite*	— Common Crow*	— Scarlet Tanager*
— Wild Turkey	— Fish Crow	— Summer Tanager*
— Virginia Rail	— Carolina Chickadee*	— Northern Cardinal*
— Spotted Sandpiper	— Tufted Titmouse*	— Blue Grosbeak
— Kildeer	— White-breasted Nuthatch*	— Indigo Bunting*
— American Woodcock*	— House Wren	— House Finch*
— Herring Gull	— Marsh Wren*	— Rufous-sided Towhee*
— Laughing Gull	— Carolina Wren*	— American Goldfinch*
— Forster's Tern	— Northern Mockingbird*	— Grasshopper Sparrow
— Mourning Dove*	— Brown Thrasher	— Field Sparrow*
— Rock Dove	— Gray Catbird*	— Field Sparrow*
— Yellow-billed Cuckoo*	— American Robin*	— Chipping Sparrow
— Barn Owl	— Eastern Bluebird*	— Song Sparrow*
— Screech Owl*	— Wood Thrush*	— Swamp Sparrow*
— Great Horned Owl	— Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	— -----
— Barred Owl*	— European Starling*	— -----
— Whip-poor Will	— White-eyed Vireo*	— -----
— Common Nighthawk	— Red-eyed Vireo*	— -----

Linda

## MEMORANDUM

TO : PARTICIPANTS IN 1994-95 SERC WINTER BIRD COUNT

FROM : JIM LYNCH 

RE : RESULT OF COUNT

DATE : 9 JANUARY 1995

This winter's count was originally scheduled for Saturday, 7 January 1995, but was postponed until 8 January because of rain and fog. So far, the winter of 1994-95 has been unusually mild, with the exception of a short but intense cold snap during the week before the count. Heavy rain fell on 6-7 January, melting any ice that had formed during the previous week. The day of the count was cool (30-40°F.), partly cloudy to sunny, and generally calm. The change of the count date and illness reduced the size of our team of counters, but we mustered 12 volunteers at the SERC visitor's center at 07:00. The group divided into three parties, each of which covered one of four sectors in the 70 km<sup>2</sup> Rhode River count area (note: this is about 5% of the area of a standard 1,810 km<sup>2</sup> Audubon Christmas Count circle). In the afternoon, the remaining sector was divided between two teams.

Although weather conditions seemed favorable, everyone's general impression was that birds were not nearly as abundant as in recent SERC counts. This impression was borne out by the final tally, which fell far below the '93 and '94 totals, both in total number of species observed (60) and in the abundance of individuals. We did have some good sightings, however. Highlights included 4 Bald Eagles, a pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers, and our first ever count record for Bobwhite. Also noteworthy was the unusually high abundance of Cedar Waxwings and American Robins, which formed mixed flocks that fairly swarmed around holly trees and other fruit-bearing trees and shrubs. Sea ducks were unusually scarce, and loons were absent. On the other hand, we had record counts of Great Blue Heron and Killdeer.

Thanks to all of you for helping to make this another successful count.

cc: Ed Balinsky, Bert Drake, Paul Fafanoff, Annette Freese, Jamie Harms, Tod Heisler, Linda McCann, Greg Ruiz, Karl Weiss, Denny Whigham, Marjorie Wonham

Linda

TO : PARTICIPANTS IN 1997 SERC WINTER BIRD COUNT  
FROM : JIM LYNCH Jim Lynch  
RE : RESULT OF COUNT  
DATE : 12 JANUARY 1997

Weather: So far, the winter of 1996-97 has been unusually mild. Temperatures reached into the 70's a week prior to the count, breaking all-time records for the Baltimore-Washington region. This balmy weather quickly deteriorated, and falling temperatures and snow flurries characterized the pre-count week. About 1" of new snow blanketed the count area the night before the count. The morning of the count was calm, clear, and cool (ca. 25° F). The day remained on the cool side, with afternoon temperatures peaking at 34-36° F, but a stiff breeze had built by mid-day. The Rhode River and West River were free of ice, a welcome change from last year's ice-locked conditions.

The count.-- We mustered 14 volunteers at the SERC visitor's center at 07:00. As usual, we broke up into four parties, each of which covered a different sector of the 70 km<sup>2</sup> Rhode River count area (this is only about 5% the size of a standard 1,810 km<sup>2</sup> Audubon Christmas Count circle). Each party was in the field for 6.5-9 hours. Weather conditions were reasonably good, and our final tally of 66 bird species was moderately high compared with previous SERC counts. We easily exceeded 1996's miserable total of 44 species and 1995's 60 species, but did not match the 1993,1994 counts, which yielded 70 and 68 species, respectively. Last year's ice-bound conditions were anathema to water birds, and in 1996 we counted only 2 species of waterfowl (Canada Goose and Tundra Swan). This year we tallied 13 waterfowl species, a record for the SERC count. Other major contrasts with last year's results included a steep decline in numbers of Canada Geese (313 vs. 2184) and a huge influx of Ruddy Ducks (none in past three years, vs. 1,248 this year). Unusual species (for the SERC area) in this year's count included the first ever records of Hooded Merganser and American Coot, and our second-ever Fox Sparrow and Chipping Sparrow.

Thanks to all of you for helping out, and I look forward to seeing you again next year.

cc: Ed Balinsky, Chris Barkan, Danny Bystrak, Paul Fofonoff, Tod Heisler, Chris Himes, Stephanie Jamieson, Jim Lynch, Karen Marti, Linda McCann, Jess Parker, Chris Swarth, Charles Weatherhill, Denny Whigham

Nice datinq anniversary of sorts. Thanks for all your help.  
Jim

**Results of 1997 SERC winter bird count (11 January 1996)**

No. of observers: 14    No. of parties: 4    Party hrs: ca. 29    Weather: clear; T = 25-35° F;  
 winds: calm in early A.M., building to moderate for rest of day    Ice: none    Sectors: 1 - Camp Letts S. to Dock Rd; 2 - Dock Rd S. to Muddy Creek; 3 - Muddy Creek S. to Cumberstone Rd; 4 - Cumberstone Rd. S. to West River.

Species	No. counted in sector				total
	1	2	3	4	
Great Blue Heron	1	1		2	4
Tundra Swan	1	1	14	22	38
Mute Swan			2	2	4
Canada Goose	3	4	28	251	313
Mallard	1	1	4	3	27
Black Duck	1	4	42	164	286
Canvasback	200			718	918
Scaup sp.	7	5		40	115
Common Goldeneye				1	1
Bufflehead	1	4		55	69
Ruddy Duck	5	77		671	1248
Red-breasted Merganser	1	0	1		11
Hooded Merganser		2	7	1	10
American Coot				3	3
Turkey Vulture	5	5	2	4	16
Black Vulture	3		7	6	16
Bald Eagle				2	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1	1	2
Red-tailed Hawk	3	2	2	1	10
Red-shouldered Hawk	1		1		2
American Kestrel	1				1
Kildeer	3		8		11
Herring Gull			1	25	26
Ring-billed Gull	6	1	7	10	159
Great Black-backed Gull	1		1	1	3
Mourning Dove		6		19	25
Belted Kingfisher	2	1	1	1	5
Common Flicker	5	3	11	3	22
Pileated Woodpecker				1	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1		4	8	13
Hairy Woodpecker				6	6
Downy Woodpecker	4	10	9	11	34
Red-bellied Woodpecker	4	5	9	16	31
Red-headed Woodpecker		1		1	2
Eastern Phoebe	1				1
Common Crow	1	7	23	14	61
Blue Jay	6	14	15	11	46
Carolina Chickadee	1	7	19	9	64

**Results of 1997 SERC winter bird count (11 January 1996) - continued**

Species	No. counted in sector				total
	1	2	3	4	
Tufted Titmouse	4	17	12	16	49
White-br. Nuthatch		2		2	4
Brown Creeper		2	1		3
Carolina Wren		1	2	1	4
Winter Wren	1	1	2		4
Northern Mockingbird	4		2	4	9
Brown Thrasher				2	2
American Robin				24	24
Hermit Thrush		2	9	3	14
Eastern Bluebird	5	11	25		41
Golden-crowned Kinglet		17	4	6	27
Cedar Waxwing			4	14	18
European Starling		1	3	31	35
Yellow-rumped Warbler	7	16	9	57	89
House Sparrow	2				2
Red-winged Blackbird	103	2		115	220
Common Grackle	7			1	8
Northern Cardinal	3	9	2	16	30
Purple Finch				1	1
House Finch	10				10
American Goldfinch	5	18	6	17	46
Rufous-sided Towhee	2		1	7	10
Dark-eyed Junco	31	107	21	19	178
White-thr. Sparrow	16	141	93	96	346
Swamp Sparrow			1	5	6
Song Sparrow	2	23	17	16	58
Chipping Sparrow			1		1
Fox Sparrow			1		1
Total Species	41	36	43	51	66